

AMENDMENT TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached drawing sheet includes changes to FIG. 2. This drawing sheet replaces the original sheet containing FIG. 2.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet, 1 page

REMARKS

Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given the present application. The application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office action, and amended as necessary to more clearly and particularly describe the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Applicant notes that FIG. 2 has been amended to correct a typo. Specifically, reference number "52" has been changed to "S2." FIG. 2 is included with this amendment.

The Examiner rejected claims 2 and 7 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicant notes that claims 2 and 7 have been amended to overcome the Examiner's rejection.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 6-8, and 10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nakamura, U.S. Pat. No. 6,324,880.

In regards to claim 1, Applicant has amended claim 1 to further differentiate the present invention over the cited prior art. Specifically, Applicant has amended claim 1 to further define the versatility of the present invention. Support for the amendment to claim 1 is found on page 8, lines 1-9, page 11, lines 1-26 and page 19, lines 8-15. No new matter has been added.

Accordingly, Applicant discloses a method of bending a flange for a wheel arch of a vehicle body that includes the steps of conveying a general-purpose actuator to a machining position with a moving mechanism while a dedicated die is being mounted on the general-purpose actuator and actuating the general-purpose

actuator to bring the dedicated die into abutment against the flange to bend the flange. A machining station to bend the flange is included in a welding station and the general-purpose actuator provided on the moving mechanism is replaceable with a welding mechanism. The welding mechanism is mounted on the moving mechanism at the welding station, whereas the general-purpose actuator is mounted on the moving mechanism at the machining station.

Thus, a feature of the present invention is that the general purpose actuator and the welding mechanism are interchangeable on the moving mechanism, which Applicant respectfully contends is not taught by Nakamura. This feature improves the versatility of the moving mechanism thereby increasing efficiency and reducing manufacturing costs.

Nakamura, on the other hand, discloses a method for hemming a workpiece with interchangeable hemming dies and a hemming system. Nakamura, however, does not disclose that the hemming die is interchangeable with another type of machining mechanism such as a welding mechanism. Thus, Nakamura does not teach all the features of claim 1. Specifically, Nakamura does not teach "wherein a machining station for bending said flange is included in a welding station for welding said vehicle body, wherein said general-purpose actuator provided on said moving mechanism is replaceable with a welding mechanism for welding said vehicle body, and wherein said welding mechanism is mounted on said moving mechanism at said welding station, whereas said general-purpose actuator is mounted on said moving mechanism at said machining station."

Rather, Nakamura teaches a hemming system that includes hemming dies 27a-27f, which correspond to various types of vehicle bodies and a die transporting

robot 29. The die transporting robot 29 includes a wrist 31, which holds the die 27a-27f and a hand changer 33. The die transporting robot 29 switches, via the hand changer 33, the dies 27a-27f to suit various types of workpieces. Specifically, referring to column 4, line 48 through column 5, line 13 of Nakamura, Nakamura explains how the hemming system changes from one die to another die to accommodate the different workpieces. Nakamura, however, does not disclose that the hemming die can be replaced with another type of machining mechanism such as a welding mechanism.

Based on the foregoing, it is apparent that Nakamura does not teach or suggest all the features of claim 1 and therefore cannot be cited as anticipating claim 1. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claim 1 based upon Nakamura are hereby requested.

Claims 2 and 3 depend from claim 1, thus, all arguments pertaining to claim 1 are equally applicable to these claims and are herein incorporated by reference.

With reference to claim 6, claim 6 has been amended to include the same features as amended claim 1. Thus, all arguments pertaining to claim 1 are equally applicable to claim 6 and will not be repeated.

Claims 7, 8, and 10 depend from claim 6, thus, all arguments pertaining to claim 6 are equally applicable to these claims and are herein incorporated by reference.

The Examiner rejected claims 4 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakamura, U.S. Pat. No. 6,324,880. Applicant notes that claims 4 and 9 have been cancelled.

The Examiner rejected claim 5 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated

by GB 2,305,695. The Examiner's rejection is traversed for the following reason.

Applicant notes that claim 5 has been amended to further differentiate claim 5 from the cited prior art. Specifically, claim 5 has been amended to include similar subject matter contained in allowable claim 11, thus, Applicant respectfully contends that claim 5 is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner allowed claims 11-13. Applicant acknowledges and appreciates the allowance of claim 11-13.

In regards to new claims 14 and 15, claims 14 and 15 depend from allowable claim 11 and are, thus, in condition for allowance.

In regards to new claims 16 and 17, claims 16 and 17 depend from allowable claim 5 and are, thus, in condition for allowance.

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and notice to that effect is hereby requested. If it is determined that the application is not in a condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to initiate a telephone interview with the undersigned attorney to expedite prosecution of the present application.

If there are any additional fees resulting from this communication, please charge same to our Deposit Account No. 18-0160, our Order No. TOH-16521.

Respectfully submitted,

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